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THE FABLE OF THE BABYLONIAN TREE

PART I: INTRODUCTION

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In the voices of animals are many marvels and powers.
(I. Afšār, ed., *Iskandarnāmah* [Tehran, 1964], p. 281.2–3)

NOTE has long been taken of some of the distinctive features of the Western Middle Iranian *Streitfabel* which bears the modern title of *Draxt i Asūrig: The Babylonian Tree* [*BT*.]¹ But discussion of the text has been by no means full, and a complete translation into a Western language has been lacking. The following remarks summarize and add to earlier studies; part II will provide a translation and commentary on individual lines.

The *Babylonian Tree* is found in a family of manuscripts containing collections of Middle Persian texts in the Pahlavi script.² It is distinguished, however, by its free use of Parthian vocabulary. This feature could not be clearly discerned at the time of E. Blochet's edition or of E. W. West's note on the text; J. M. Unvala also did not recognize it and consequently was led to theorize a rather tortuous history for *BT*.³ C. Bartholomae identified the Parthian lexical items present, and these have since been regarded as traces of a long history of oral transmission before *BT* was reduced to writing.⁴ They include the following basic words:

¹ The title was given by J. M. Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 2 (Bombay, 1913; reprint ed., vols. 1 and 2, Tehran, 1939) on the basis of v. 1: *draxt...tar o šahr asūrig*. It is unsatisfactory, not only because it fails to reflect the character of the text as a tenson, but also because a Middle Iranian phrase “Assyrian (i.e., Aramean) date-palm” might have denoted, besides geographical location, a precise species of palm (see J. Newman, *The Agricultural Life of the Jews in Babylonia between the Years 200 C.E.–500 C.E.* [London, 1932], pp. 97–98). Here a late phonemicization of ‘swlyk is preferred: cf. New Persian and Arabic Sūristān (J. Markwart, *Erānshahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Korenae'i*, Abh. der König. Gesell. der Wiss. zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl., N.F. III/2 [Berlin, 1901], p. 21) and late Middle Persian Sūrig (B. T. Anklesaria, ed. and trans., *Bundahišn* [hereafter *Bd.*] 31.6 [Bombay, 1956]), p. 205.11–12 (facsimile, T. D. Anklesaria, ed. [Bombay, 1908]), both “Assyria.” The earlier Middle Iranian form was presumably *āsōrig*, reflecting Aramaic and Syriac Āthōr; cf. the form loaned into Armenian, Asorestan (Markwart, *Erānshahr*, p. 21). For Asūristān (“Assyria” in Šāpūr I’s Ka’bah-i Zardušt inscription; see A. Marieq, “Classica et Orientalia,” *Syria* 35 [1958]: 305, line 2) = Bēth Arāmāyē, i.e., Babylonia, see Strabo 16.1.1. Cf. the Middle Persian Šahristānihā i Erān 52:

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“The capital of Asūr is the city Weh-Ardašir,” i.e., New Seleucia (Jamasp-Asana, *The Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 1 [Bombay, 1897], p. 23; Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Erānshahr* [Rome, 1931], p. 21).

² See description in B. T. Anklesaria’s introduction to Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 2. (*BT* was edited in that volume, pp. 109–14.) That version was reprinted in the re-edition of Māhyār Nawwābī, ed., *Manzūmah-i Draxt Asūrig* (Tehran, 1946); cf. the copy from the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript, Supplément persan no. 1216 in E. Blochet, “Textes hebreus inédits relatifs à la religion mazdéenne,” *Revue de l’histoire de religions* 32 (1895): 18–23, facsimile. Nawwābī re-edited the text in verse form, transcribed it in roman script, and translated it into Persian; his introduction, notes, and glossary systematically collect the results of the earlier studies of the text.

³ Blochet, “Textes,” pp. 233–41; West in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, vol. 2 (Strassburg, 1904), p. 119; Unvala, “Draxt i Asūrik,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies* 2 (1921): 637–78.

⁴ C. Bartholomae, *Zur Kenntnis der mitteliranischen Mundarten*, no. 4, *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Ak. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl.*, 6. Abh., (Heidelberg, 1922), pp. 23–28; see, e.g., J. C. Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier* (Leipzig, 1956), p. 133; M. Boyce, “Middle Persian Literature,” *Iranistik*, Band 4, *Literatur*, Abschnitt 2, Lieferung 1, ed. B. Spuler, *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Abteilung 1 (Leiden and Cologne, 1968), p. 55.

Parthian		Instead of Middle Persian	in verses
<i>kar-</i>	<i>kun-</i>	"do"	passim
<i>hirz-</i>	<i>hil-</i>	"let"	24
<i>ās-</i>	<i>āy-</i>	"come"	105
<i>wāž-</i>	<i>gōw-</i>	"say"	41
<i>wāxt</i>	<i>guft</i>	"said"	28, 110
<i>haw</i>	<i>ān</i>	"he, that"	52, 53, 94
<i>harwin</i>	<i>har</i>	"all" (Parthian pl.)	51, 78
<i>čē</i>	<i>i</i>	connective particle	81
<i>yad</i>	<i>tā</i>	"until"	25
<i>wasnād</i>	<i>rāy</i>	"for"	passim
<i>bid</i>	<i>did</i>	"then"	97, 103

BT is also distinctive in that it is a rare example of a secular verse text. E. Benveniste demonstrated the text's poetic form with transcriptions of selected passages.⁵ He found that the verses were not isosyllabic but did show a tendency toward eleven-syllable lines, for which he found parallels in Iranian Manichean hymns. The frequency of eleven-syllable verses is not surprising, in view of the loose homotony of Middle Iranian verse. If x = the number of stresses per half-verse, then the total number of syllables per half-verse will usually range between $2x$ and $4x$; *BT* accommodates two stresses per half-verse and in this respect agrees with quite common Manichean patterns.⁶ W. B. Henning emphasized the homotonic character of *BT*, while also improving on its reading.⁷

The brief postscript to *BT* refers to it as a song (*srūd*). But even if this statement were lacking, the prosodic comparison between *BT* and the Manichean hymns would suggest that the mixed-dialect text was originally meant to be sung. More specifically, it was probably delivered in a chant or recitative; perhaps it was punctuated with melodic ornamentation in a manner somewhat similar to the treatment of Manichean hymns.⁸ In any case it displays abundant use of repetition and parallelism in verse construction—devices familiar both in the hymn literature and in epic tradition. The latter is best attested in the Persian *Šāhnāmah*; but the Middle Persian *Ayādgār i Zarērān* [Memoir of Zarēr] retains some of its original poetic form and offers verses which may be compared with *BT*. The following example is a charm (*āfrīn*) which Bastwar recites (*gōwēd*) over his arrow:

<i>nūn tīr az man šawēh</i>	<i>pērōz-āwar āyēh</i>
<i>pad har razm ud pādrāzm ī tō</i>	<i>pērōz ud weh pādrōz</i>
<i>nām āwarēh jāwēdān rōzān</i>	<i>dūšmen murd āwareh</i>
<i>ud nūn bārag ud drafš im</i>	<i>kār-um tō framāyēh</i>
<i>spāh Īrān</i>	
<i>nāmāwurd ē bowēh</i>	<i>yad ō rōz jāwēd</i>

⁵ E. Benveniste, "Le Texte du *Draxt Asūrik* et la versification pehlieve," *Journal Asiatique* 1930, pp. 193–25. Cf. the didactic poems studied in S. Shaked, "Specimens of Middle Persian Verse," *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), pp. 395–405.

⁶ On the prosody of Manichean literature, see Boyce, *The Manichean Hymn Cycles in Parthian*

(Oxford, 1954), pp. 45–59; idem, "Middle Persian literature," pp. 55–56.

⁷ Henning, "A Pahlavi Poem," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950): 641–48.

⁸ For descriptions of the cantillation of Manichean hymns, see E. Wellesz, "Probleme der musikalischen

“Now, arrow, go from me; come [back] bringing victory.
 In your every attack and
 counterattack [be] victorious and of fine glory.
 Bring fame for days eternal; bring the foe to death.
 And now, steed and flag of
 this army of Iran,
 May you be famed accomplish my task.
 until the day eternal.”⁹

These verses show a strong preference for vocalic and resonant endings (retaining the second singular *-ēh* even when two entities are addressed)—a feature notable in Manichean hymnody but not apparent in *BT*. The *Ayādgār* shares with *BT* some points, such as Parthian *yad ū rōz jāwēd*, and may well have experienced a similar oral transmission. As a written text, and perhaps while still oral, it would have been more subject to revision than *BT*, since it deals with a major point of sacred history—the war between King Wištāsp and Arjāsp.

BT is also of interest for its genre; it is the sole example in Pahlavi literature of a fable¹⁰ and of a fable taking the expanded form of a tenson. While *BT* fits within the very general category of Middle Iranian “didactic” (*handarz*) texts, it lacks the usual Zoroastrian admonitory approach. In the textual remains of ancient Iranian culture, there is a notable absence of the plant and animal fables so abundant in Western classical tradition or of tensons, which are well represented in Sumerian and Akkadian literature. Such absence cannot simply be blamed on the priests who preserved the scribal arts in post-Sasanian Iran and whose preferences were probably for the transmission of religiously edifying texts. If animal fables were abundant in Sasanian Iran, one might expect to find, in the ample stamp seal remains, an occasional playful depiction of animal activity similar to those occurring in Roman art. But in practice animals are placed in set, heraldic poses or in heroic hunting scenes; the only clear form of play with their imagery is the practice of combining the head of one animal with the body of another.¹¹

The indigenous Iranian tradition of the verbal contest remains close to ritual and judicial process; judgment is arrived at through the immanent power of the true word (which may be attested through the miracle [*abdih*] of the ordeal), and the esthetic factor

Orientforschung,” *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* (1917), pp. 15–18; A. Machabey, “La Cantillation manichéenne,” *La Revue musicale* 227 (1955): 5–20; see also my work *A Syntax of Western Middle Iranian* (Albany, New York, 1977), pp. 254–59.

⁹ Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, p. 13.1–5; A. Pagliaro, “Il Testo pahlavico Ayātkār-i-Zarērān,” *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, Cl. di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, Ser. 6, 1 (1925): 588–89; H. S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1964), p. 27.18–23. On the versification of the text, see Benveniste, “Le Mémorial de Zarēr: poème pehlevi mazdeen,” *Journal Asiatique* 1932, pp. 245–93.

¹⁰ “A fable (*mythos*) is a fictional narrative illustrating a truth” (Theon, *Progymnasmata* 3; C. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, vol. 1 [Tübingen, 1832], p. 172). For discussion see Ben Edwin Perry, *Babrius and Phae-*

drus, Loeb Classical Library, no. 436, (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1975), pp. xix ff. See also his *Aesopica*, vol. 1 (Urbana, 1952) and “Demetrius of Phalerum and the Aesopic Fables,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962): 287–346 (with further bibliography of Perry and others).

¹¹ See discussion of nos. 1–3 in my article “Sasanian Seals in the Moore Collection: Motive and Meaning in Some Popular Subjects,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 14 (1979–80). A seal in a private New York collection may be an exception. A water buffalo stands in right profile, a rabbit between its fore and hind legs; one is reminded of the Sanskrit *Hipotadeśa* 3.4 [Elephant and Hares]. See the hunting scene (dog, antelope, and rabbit) in P. Gignoux, “Intailles sassanides de la collection Pirouzan” *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg, Acta Iranica*, 2d ser., vol. 3 (Leiden and Tehran-Liège, 1975), pl. 8, fig. 3.4. Is humor intended in fig. 4.22, a family of rabbits?

is negligible.¹² In Middle Persian literature the clearest example of the indigenous verbal contest is the *Mādiyān i Yōšt i Friyān* [Book of Yōšt of the Friyān]. This text, like the *Ayādgār*, uses the framework of a legend of the Good Religion (referred to in *Yašt* 5.81–83 of the Avesta): the Zoroastrian hero Yōšt meets the challenge of the wizard Axt in a duel of riddles after the latter had outwitted and slain many previous contestants. Axt exhausts his stock of questions on the divinely aided hero, then falls victim when the Evil Spirit withholds the answers to Yōšt's.¹³ By contrast, the quasi-historical *Gizistag Abāliš* [Accursed Abāliš] is divorced from folklore and essentially follows the common *handarz* format of a compilation of sayings. It reports on a religious dispute enacted at the court of Caliph al-Ma'mūn (A.D. 813–33) between a lapsed Zoroastrian and the distinguished priest Ādurfarnbag, son of Farrooxzād; but the degenerate opponent is shown only as asking questions and is given no opportunity to argue.¹⁴

BT shares with these texts a theme of superiority expressed in valid knowledge but differs markedly in style. Thus it is natural to compare *BT* with the Mesopotamian tensons and to view it as based on their literary tradition.¹⁵ There are, admittedly, few specific parallels between verses of *BT* and Mesopotamian tensons; and these occasion no surprise, in view of the duplication of subject matter. Moreover *BT* is focused on the debate itself (or rather, the contestants' two orations); it has only the barest indication of a tripartite division into introduction, body of debate, and judgment which is characteristic of Near Eastern tensons.¹⁶ But there are important points of agreement: (1) *BT* sets the debate in a fable context, as do the Sumerian and Akkadian texts; it matches the producer of one of the noblest fruits against the producer of the most nourishing of animal foods;¹⁷ (2) accordingly its concern is with superlatives. The protagonists enumerate their actual uses without artifice or symbolism; they boast of themselves and attack each other in the vigorous manner of the Mesopotamian debates.

It is not difficult to visualize a historical context for the oral transmission of specific

¹² See, for example, Zardušt's encounter with the demons in *Dēnkard* 5.2.6–7 and *Dēnkard* 7 generally, M. Molé, ed. and trans., *La Légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlvies* (Paris, 1967). For the importance of the esthetic element in classifying a tenzon as wisdom literature, see J. J. A. van Dijk, *La Sagesse suméro-accadienne: recherches sur les genres littéraires des textes sapientiaux* (Leiden, 1953), p. 33. See regarding contest literature and legal processes, B. Landsberger, "Jahreszeiten im Sumerisch-akkadischen," *JNES* 8 (1949): 295–96; see also F. B. J. Kuiper, "The Ancient Aryan Verbal Contest," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4 (1960): 217–81.

¹³ H. Jamaspji Asa and M. Haug, ed. and trans., *The Book of Arda Viraf . . . and an Appendix Containing the Texts and Translations of the Gosht-i Fryano and Hadokht-Nask* (Bombay and London, 1872), pp. 207–66.

¹⁴ H. F. Chacha, ed. and trans., *Gajastak Abāliš* (Bombay, 1936).

¹⁵ See, for example, E. Ebeling, *Die babylonische Fabel und ihre Bedeutung für die Literaturgeschichte*, MAOG 2/3 (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 14–15. W. G. Lambert pointed to traces of the Babylonian "Tamarisk and Palm" in *BT* (*Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford, 1960]), p. 154.

¹⁶ van Dijk, *Sagesse*, p. 39. Compare the abrupt

opening of *BT* with the leisurely introductions of "Tamarisk and Palm" and "Ox and Horse" (Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, pp. 155–57, 176–77).

¹⁷ "The date-palm is worth all the plants between heaven and earth" except for the mythical Gökarn tree (*Bd.* 17 A.1/p. 122.7–8). "Of fruits, the date and grape are called the greatest and best"; "of the food that people eat, the milk of small cattle (*gospandān*) has been created as best. . . . If people experience the milk of small cattle when they withdraw from mother's milk, then bread is not necessary for them" (D. P. Sanjana, ed., *Dādistān i mēnōg i xrad* 16.16, 4, 7–8 (Bombay, 1895); E. W. West, trans., *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 3, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 24 [Oxford, 1885]). Zoroastrian literature attributes speech to two mythical birds (*Bd.* 24.25 and 28/p. 154.5–7 and 11–15) but not usually to ordinary animals. In the legend of Zardušt, a delegation of animals, both real (a stoat, ermine, hare, and antelope) and mythical, accompanied him to see the god Ohrmazd: "Before their coming to the interview, their tongues were loosed; they spoke with the speech of humans. . . . They accepted the Religion from Ohrmazd by means of the speech of humans." (B. T. Anklesaria, ed., *Wizidagihā i Zātspram* 23.2 [Bombay, 1964]).

tension fables from Mesopotamia to western Iran, especially those which relate to fundamentals of economic life. The question of such transmission should perhaps be joined with that of the diffusion of the sayings and fables collected in the story of Ahiqar (one of which is discussed below); Babylonian influence may already have begun in the Achaemenid period.¹⁸ For *BT*, however, a later date seems more supportable. Sidney Smith's suggestion of the second century B.C. remains plausible, even though his theory that the text is a polemic in symbolic language against Mesopotamian religion was untenable.¹⁹ Such a dating (ca. the reign of Mithridates I) would render *BT* evidence of that period's cultural interaction between Iranian-speakers and Aramaic-speakers of Mesopotamia and Elymais; the text would then be roughly contemporary with the debate on the topic "what is strongest" in III Esdras 3:4–4:42. The latter has been regarded as an Iranian influence on the text,²⁰ and the cosmological allusion in 4:34 is certainly in harmony with Iranian ideas: "The earth is large, and heaven is high. And the sun is swift in his course, for he revolves around heaven and hastens back to his own place in a single day."²¹ Compare Zātspram's description of the end of night: "The sun . . . has come back to his own place and has completed a revolution."²²

It is of interest that, in this same period, the *Book of Tobit* combines references to the wise Ahiqar (even having him journey to Elymais) with possible Iranian motifs: (a) the geographical setting is the Arsacid empire, centering on Media, i.e., Parthia.²³ A journey is outlined, even though only vaguely accurate, from Nineveh to Ahmadān and on to Rayy; (b) "the base spirit" (*το δαιμόνιον τὸ πνωηρὸν*) Asmodeus may reflect "the demon Rage" (Aēšma daēva) of Zoroastrianism. Asmodeus's flight to Upper Egypt, i.e., to a desert region, is in keeping with Iranian, as well as other peoples' ideas of the behavior of demons;²⁴ (c) the role of the dog as Tobias's companion and as auspicious messenger of the travelers' return is in keeping with Iranian belief that dogs repel demons and have

¹⁸ See A. Cowley's comments on the Aramaic Ahiqar fragment, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1923), p. 208. The existence (or survival into the Sasanian period) in Iran of the frame-story for Ahiqar's sayings is problematic. The semi-legendary sage and vizier Wuzurg-Mihr only vaguely recalls his Near Eastern counterpart and, of course, is eventually executed by Xusraw II; see Mas'ūdi, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1863), pp. 206–25. See discussions in T. Nöldeke, "Zu Kalila wa Dimna," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morganländischen Gesellschaft* 59 (1905): 804; idem, "Burzōes Einleitung zum Buche Kalila wa Dimna," *Schriften der Wiss. Gesell. in Strassburg* 12 (1912): 104 ff. (with further references); A. Christensen, "La Legende du sage Buzurjmehr," *Acta Orientalia* 8 (1929): 103–4.

¹⁹ S. Smith, "Notes on 'The Assyrian Tree,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies* 4 (1926–28): 76. Smith commented on Unvala's incomplete translation (see n. 3) and apparently was not familiar with Zoroastrian polemical literature. Nawwābi's edition eliminates the basis for most of Smith's conjectures.

²⁰ See G. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne-Opladen, 1960), pp. 36–37. For analyses of the debate, see W. Rudolph, "Der Wettstreit der Leibwächter des Darius 3 Esr 3–5₆," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

61 (1945): 176–90; R. Laqueur, "Ephorus," *Hermes* 46 (1911): 168–70.

²¹ A. Rahlf, ed., *Septuaginta*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1949), p. 879. In Iranian terms, the sun describes a circle on a plane which is inclined to the plane of the surface of the earth-disk; see *Bd.* 5 B.1/p. 55.3–4 and cf. diagram in D. N. MacKenzie, "Zoroastrian Astrology in the *Bundahišn*," *BSOAS* 27 (1964): 519. When the sun regains the zenith of the sky-dome, it will illuminate the entire earth at the same time (*Dēnkard* 7.8.58/p. 667.12–14; D. M. Madan, ed., *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard* [Bombay, 1911]).

²² Zātspram 34.25: *xwāršēd . . . abāz ő xwēš gyāg mad ud gardišn frazāmēnīd*. The conventional epithet of the sun is "swift-horsed"; see, for example, *Yašt* 10.13 and 90 of the Avesta and B. T. Anklesaria, ed., *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 9.1–7 (Bombay, 1957).

²³ Sed generaliter Parthia dicitur, quamuis Scripturae Sanctae uniuersam saepe Mediam uocent . . . Ecbatanam urbem caput Parthici regni . . . (Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos Libri VII*, ed. C. Zangmeister [Vienna, 1882] 1.2.19, 6.4.9).

²⁴ See Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), cols. 35–36; Louis H. Gray, "Foundations of the Iranian Religions," *J. of the Cambr Oriental Institute* 15 (1929): 186 (with a contrary view); Widengren, *Kulturbegrenzung*, p. 37. For the desert as appropriate country for demons, see *Bd.* 28.19/p. 195.2–8.

a special bond to humankind;²⁵ (d) the text's central idea of a heavenly guide for a journey conforms to Zoroastrian mythology, although such journeys as those of King Wištāsp and Blessed Wirāz are made in a dream state to the immaterial world. Compare Zardušt's encounter with the Beneficent Immortal Wahman, who escorts him to his first meeting with Ohrmazd.²⁶

If the tension in III Esdras is taken as a rough terminus post quem for *BT*, then one might suggest for a terminus ante quem approximately the beginning of the Christian era. From Strabo's remarks on Babylonia, he might almost have heard the song to which he refers (*Geography* 16.1.14):

The country supplies other things from the date-palm: bread and wine and vinegar and honey and meal. All sorts of plaited things are from it. Bronzesmiths burn the stones instead of coal. These, soaked, are fodder for cows and sheep to be fattened. They say there is a Persian song in which they enumerate the 360 uses [of the tree].

If the number "360" suggests that the song was a celebration of the agricultural seasons, it is also an interesting archaism. It is the number of days in the old solar year reflected in the Avesta, in contrast to the "Younger Avestan" calendar of 365 days which was already in use in the Achaemenid period. Note Quintus Curtius's account of the ritual with which Darius III's army set out on a march (3.3.10):

Magi proximi patrium carmen canebant. Magos trecenti et sexaginta quinque iuvenes sequebantur puniceis amiculis velati, diebus totius anni pares numero; quippe Persis quoque in totidem dies discriptus est annus.²⁷

It is thus possible that the date-palm song was a purely indigenous piece of folklore which became reshaped under the influence of an oral Mesopotamian text which, like the Sumerian tension of Enkidu and Dumuzi (see reference below), expressed the perennial tension between the farmer tending his crops and the herdsman with his voracious flocks.

Whatever the history of *BT* during the Sasanian period, the art of that time (and perhaps its aftermath) occasionally juxtaposes the date-palm with the species of small *gōspand* ("cloven-hoofed animals," i.e., sheep and goats). The general motif occurs already in the Arsacid period (tree and two stags);²⁸ depictions on Sasanian seals include a tree with two goats, with a ram and a goat, or with two rams.²⁹ More complicated scenes occur on silver vessels: a bowl in Kiev with tree and ram and goat clymant; a Hermitage plate with tree, two rams, and snake; a Hermitage cup with scenes of tree and rams and of vine and goat.³⁰

²⁵ The special role of the dog in ancient Iranian culture is implied already in Herodotus 1.140. For summary and earlier literature, see my *Sasanian Stamp Seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1978), motif 3.1. A much needed discussion of the dog in Zoroastrian ritual and belief is provided in Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977), index.

²⁶ *Zātsprām* 21; on Wištāsp, see the texts in Molé, *Légende* and n. 12 above; for the account of Blessed Wirāz, see n. 13 above.

²⁷ On the 360-day solar year and its continued use in ancient Iran, see S. H. Taqizadeh, *Old Iranian Calendars* (London, 1938), pp. 14–15; Boyce, "On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33 (1970): 515–18. On the 365-day calendars, see, additionally, Nyberg, *Texte zum mazdayasnischen Kalendar* (Uppsala, 1934).

²⁸ M. E. Masson and G. A. Pugachenkova, "Ottiski parthyanskikh pechatej iz Nisy," *VDI* [*Vestnik drevnej istorii*] 50 (1954): fig. 13 (after p. 166). Cf. P. Horn and G. Steindorff, *Sassanidische Siegelsteine* (Berlin, 1891), pl. 2, no. 1221.

²⁹ R. N. Frye, ed., *Sasanian Seals in the Collection of Mohsen Foroughi*, Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, vol. 6, pt. 3: Plates, Portfolio 2 (London, 1971). nos. 173, 179; A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum, Stamp Seals II: The Sassanian Dynasty* (London, 1969), ES 3; see also my *Stamp Seals*, p. 93 (motif 3 fe).

³⁰ A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (London and New York, 1938): (a) p. 895, fig. 310; (b) pl. 232 A; (c) pl. 222 B and A.

The genre of the tenson was re-introduced into Iran during the Islamic period: the compositions of the poet Asadī (late tenth to early eleventh centuries A.D.) became models for the stylized and artificial debate texts of later imitators.³¹ These are distinctly removed from the folk themes of ancient Mesopotamian tensons (although two Arabic texts, "Grapevine and Sugarcane" and "Grapevine and Date-palm" should be studied for possible contrast in this regard).³² Thus it is remarkable to find an anonymous tenson fable *Ewe and Grapevine* (*Mēš u Raz*) [*EG*] recorded in a late Jewish Persian manuscript (no. 1244 in the collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City). This collection of texts, copied by a David b. Ahābā, bears a date equivalent to 1843. Its contents were outlined by W. Bacher, and *EG* has been discussed at greater length by J. P. Asmussen.³³ *EG* comprises 122 verses (cf. *BT* with 117) in couplets (ff. 88 b 9–92 b 9); these are written in a direct, simple style comparable to that of *BT*. Its leisurely introduction (17 vv.) describes how a man took pity on a starving ewe during a drought. He brought her into his house, fed her, and turned her loose in the garden. The ewe, in proceeding to nibble at a grapevine, provoked an energetic debate. The eloquence of the vine prevails, and the ewe seeks to placate it, thus providing a moral.

BT inevitably shows some parallels to *EG*, as well as to the Sumerian "Enkidu and Dumuzi"; some of these will be indicated in the commentary to the translation (see Part II of this article). But one feature shared by the two Iranian texts is uncommon: both are "asymmetrical" debates, opposing an important plant and an important animal. Tensons usually involve two opponents who are generically similar but functionally distinct or antithetical. The surviving ancient tensons which oppose animate characters in a symmetrical structure include:

sycamore	vs.	date-palm ³⁴
tamarisk	vs.	date-palm
tree	vs.	reed
bird	vs.	fish
cow	vs.	horse
farmer	vs.	herder
(Enkidu)		(Dumuzi) ³⁵
barley	vs.	wheat
(nisaba)		

³¹ Asadi's tensons are collected in H. Ethe, "Über persische Tenzonen," *Abh. und Vorträge des Fünften Internationalen Orientalisten-Congresses, Erstes Hälfte* (Berlin, 1882), pp. 48–135. See also *Grundriss*, vol. 2, pp. 226–29. On the terminology classifying Islamic tensons, see G. E. von Grunebaum, "Greek Form Elements in the Arabian Nights," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 62 (1942): 287–88. Many examples of dialogues based on this literary tradition (and also of fables) may be found in the work of the modern poetess Parvin I'tisāmī—"Ant and Snake," "Wolf and Bat," "Jewel and Stone," "Arrow and Bow," etc. (*Dīwān-i qasā'id u maṣnawiyāt*, 2d ed. [Tehran, 1944]). For discussion of her poetry, see H. Moayyad, "Parvin's Poems: A Cry in the Wilderness," *Islamwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen Fritz Meier zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 164–90.

³² Listed in M. Steinschneider, "Rangstreitliteratur," *Sitzungsberichte Ak. Wiss. zu Wien* 155 (1908): Abh. 4, p. 85 (no. 145), p. 29 (no. 24).

³³ *A Reel Guide to the Poetry and Belles Lettres Collection, Reels 1–26, from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1977), p. 3; W. Bacher, "Zur jüdisch-persischen Literatur," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morganländischen Gesellschaft* 65 (1911): 523–35; J. P. Asmussen, "A Jewish-Persian Munāzare," *Iran Society Silver Jubilee Souvenir* (Calcutta, 1970), pp. 23–27.

³⁴ For an indication of this text in Egyptian literature, see D. Opitz, "Eine verlorene Tell-el-Amarna-Tafel," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 36 (1925): 80–81; for other fables in Egypt, see R. J. Williams, "The Fable in the Ancient Near East," *A Stubborn Faith: Papers . . . Presented to Honor William Andrew Irwin* (Dallas, 1956), pp. 3–26.

³⁵ See list of Sumerian and Akkadian tensons in van Dijk, *Sagesse*, pp. 40–41; for the last named text, see his translation, pp. 65–73.

The exception to this pattern is “Cattle vs. Wheat.” Similarly in the classical Aesopean corpus, which includes numerous fables with the theme of assertion of superiority, one finds numerous animal:animal confrontations; plant “debates” are fewer.³⁶

fig	vs.	olive (<i>Aesopica</i> 413)
laurel	vs.	olive (<i>Aesopica</i> 439; Callimachus, iamb IV)
fir tree	vs.	bramble (Babrius no. 64)
pomegranate	vs.	apple (mediated by bramble, <i>Aesopica</i> 213)
rose	vs.	amaranth (an inverted debate, exchanging praise; <i>Aesopica</i> 369)

The extensive body of symmetrical oppositions is complemented by a sparse number of asymmetrical non-tension fables: e.g., fox and bramble (*Aesopica* 19); bat, gull, and bramble (*Aesopica* 171); and the familiar fox and grapes (Babrius no. 19, *Phaedrus* 4.3). One fable continued in later Western literature approaches the form of a dispute but places words only in the animal’s mouth: stag and grapevine (*Aesopica* 77). One other, which achieves a sharper irony, was popular in the Mediterranean world but did not survive in Western fable tradition. It may be regarded as a highly condensed debate confrontation, and it invites comparison with its Near Eastern analogue and presumed parent and with the Iranian tensons. (In the following table, “winner” designates the character with the final, decisive word):

winner	loser	texts
madder	gazelle/goat	Ahiqar tradition ³⁷
grapevine	goat	<i>Aesopica</i> 374
grapevine	ewe	<i>EG</i>
goat	date palm	<i>BT</i>

Only in *BT* does the animal triumph, as if reflecting the victory of Dumuzi and nomadic movement over Enkidu and agricultural stasis. In *EG* almost the same confrontation leads to an opposite outcome, which is in harmony with the two concise, ironic fables. All four sources depict a similar basic situation, which rests on prosaic facts of similar economies. Such shared experience could easily lead to either independent but parallel patterns in folklore or to the ready transmission of items of folklore from one culture to its neighbor, whether orally or by conscious literary activity. The explicit influence of the Ahiqar corpus on the Aesopean offers a clear example of such a process.³⁸

³⁶ For animal debates, see the indexes in Perry’s *Aesopica* and *Babrius* and *Phaedrus*; the serial numbers assigned to Aesopean stories in *Aesopica* are used in the following list. On plant debates, see also A. Wünsche, *Die Pflanzenfabel in der Weltliteratur* (1905; reprint Leipzig, 1974). With the following list compare Ahiqar’s simile of the almond and the mulberry trees, an implied debate (F. C. Conybeare, J. Rendel Harris, and A. S. Lewis, *The Story of Ahikar* [London, 1898], p. 61, from the Syriac version).

³⁷ The version translated on p. 199 has the madder alone speaking (like the grapevine in *Aesopica* 374); the other versions (see n. 39 below) render the fable as a brief dialogue.

³⁸ See discussions in Perry’s works; R. Smend, “Alter und Herkunft des Achikar-Romans und sein Verhältnis zu Aesop,” *Beihete zur ZAW* 13 (Giessen, 1908), pp. 55–125; H. Diels, “Orientalische Fabeln in griechischem Gewande,” *Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft Kunst und Technik* 4 (1910): cols. 993–1002. The Aesopean “Goat and Grapevine” was studied in this context at length by W. R. Halliday, “The Fable of the Goat and the Vine,” *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 11 (1924): 95–102; idem, *Indo-European Folk-Tales and Greek Legend* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 143–52; idem, *Greek and Roman Folklore* (reprint ed. New York, 1963), pp. 111–14. See also Wünsche, *Pflanzenfabel*, pp. 34–35.

The Aramaic fragment of the sayings of Ahiqar does not include the fable of gazelle/goat and madder/sumac. The later versions in Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Old Church Slavonic contain this story; but only the Arabic text does not distort it so as to lose the ironic thrust which is also at the heart of the Aesopean fable. The Arabic version is as follows:³⁹ “My boy, you are like the gazelle who ate the roots of the madder. So it said to her: ‘Eat of me today and be sated. Tommorrow they will tan your hide in my roots.’” It has been plausibly theorized that the fable of “goat and madder” was part of the Ahiqar corpus in the Achaemenid period and that, when Theophrastus wrote his *Acicharus* in the late fourth century B.C., he modified this story, placing it in the familiar context of Greek sacrificial ritual.⁴⁰ In the early third century, perhaps still in Theophrastus’s lifetime, Leonidas of Tarentum versified the fable (either from the *Acicharus* or an oral version). Despite the alteration, the motif of the root survives (*Greek Anthology* 9.99):

In a vineyard a gamboling, well-bearded husband goat
devoured all the tender shoots of a grapevine.
From the earth it addressed him so: ‘Most wicked, shear off
with your jaws our fruitbearing branch!
Yet my root, enduring [lit., ‘in the ground’], will again
sprout sweet nectar enough to pour a libation for you, goat, being sacrificed.’”

Another early version, by Evenus of Ascalon, condenses the fable into a most concise epigram (*Greek Anthology* 9.75): “Though you’ve eaten me to the root, I will still bear fruit enough to pour a libation for you, goat, being sacrificed.” This riposte was apparently popular. It is found inscribed and illustrated at Pompeii;⁴¹ and it was quoted when the emperor Domitian (A.D. 79–96) attempted to restrict the number of vineyards (Suetonius 8.14.2). However the “classical” form of the complete fable was the versified version by Babrius (late first century A.D.) which survives in a prose paraphrase:⁴²

A goat ate the shoot of a vine at its putting forth. The vine said to him: “Why are you hurting me; is there in fact no foliage? Still I will supply as much wine as they need for you when being sacrificed.”

By this time a moral had been attached: “This fable reproves those who are ungrateful and wishing to take advantage of friends.”

³⁹ Conybeare, *Story*, p. 26.7–9 (text)/113 (translation). Cf. Syriac (gazelle and sumac): p. 67/80; Armenian (goat and madder): p. 57/52; Old Church Slavonic (goat and sumac): p. 21 and V. Jagić, “Der weise Akyrios,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 1 (1892): 125. See also Nöldeke, *Untersuchungen zum Achiqar-Roman*, Abh. König. Gesell. Wiss. zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl., N.F. 14, no. 4, (Berlin, 1913), pp. 45–46; F. Nau, *Histoire et sagesse d’Ahikar l’Assyrien* (Paris, 1909), p. 238, no. 99. Neither the variation of the dye-plant nor that of the animal is very significant. For example, for the gazelle as a member of the goat “genus” in Iranian zoology, see *Bd.* 13.12/p. 95.8–9. Similarly, in folk botany, it would not be difficult to

class *Rhus* (sumac) trees and shrubs together with Rubiaceae trees, shrubs, and herbs.

⁴⁰ See detailed discussion in Halliday, “Fable,” p. 98; *Folk-Tales*, p. 149.

⁴¹ A. M. and C. Zangemeister, eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. 4, *Inscriptionum Parietariarum Pompeianarum Supplementum* (Berlin, 1909), no. 3407, 6. For pastoral scenes with browsing and grazing goats, see K. D. White, *Roman Farming* (Ithaca, 1970), figs. 67–70.

⁴² C. Halm, *Fabulae aesopicae collectae* (Leipzig, 1852), no. 404; O. Crusius, *Babrii fabulae aesopae* (Leipzig, 1897), no. 181; E. Chambray, *Esope fables* (Paris, 1927), no. 339.

An interesting transformation of this story is an etiological myth to which Pausanias refers with scorn (*Pariegeta* 2.38.3):

What is related by the people in Nauplia about an ass: having grazed the shoot of a vine, he caused the fruit to appear subsequently in greater abundance. And it is on this account that an ass has been fashioned in the rock by them, because he taught the pruning of vines.

The familiarity of the Greek fable in the Roman world has already been alluded to. In the first century B.C. Varro discoursed on the destructiveness of goats to vines, which allegedly provided the motive for their sacrifice to Bacchus (*De re rustica* 1.2.18–20). Varro also regarded the goat's saliva as poisonous to olive trees, an idea which Pliny extended (*Historia naturalis* 8.204): *Morsus earum arbori est exitialis; olivam lambendo quoque sterilem faciunt.* Vergil warned against the danger to vines from “questing goats” (*capraeaeque sequaces*), as well as from other grazing animals, and went on to refer to the offering to Bacchus (*Georgica* 2.371–96). Ovid, in paraphrasing the fable, compared the goat's mischief to that of hogs in a grain field (*Fasti* 1.353–60):

sus dederat peonas, exemplo territus huius
palmite debueras abstinuisse caper.
quem spectans aliquis dentes in vite prementem
talia non tacito dicta dolore dedit:
“rode caper vitem, tamen hinc cum stabis ad aram
in tua quod spargi cornua possit, erit.”
verba fides sequitur. noxae tibi deditus hostis
spargitur adfuso cornua Bacche mero.

It may be noted that Theophrastus and the other relaters of fables could have transformed the Aḥiqar story in another fashion. A familiar image, at least in the Roman period, is that of a goat browsing on a mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*). Thus Babrius (fable no. 3) tells of a herder calling his flock, but there was “one disobedient [goat] browsing the sweet growth of *Aegilops* and mastic in a gully.” Columella (likewise of the first century A.D.) does not cite mastic in his list of goats’ preferred browsing (*De re rustica* 7.6.1), but he does recommend mastic tips as fodder for kids (7.6.7); Claudius Aelianus indicates that these were a treat (*De natura animalium* 6.42). Pliny enumerates many medicinal uses of mastic and implies that the milk of goats which have fed on its leaves has curative powers (*Historia naturalis* 24.43).⁴³ The medicine for dropsy requires goat’s blood as an ingredient, and it is rendered more potent if the goat has eaten mastic (27.232). An ironic fable could surely have been composed using that theme.

In theory, some of the classical lore about goats, vines, mastic, etc., could have reached Sasanian Iran and entered its court literature. For at least one agricultural text, the *Geponica* compiled by Cassianus Bassus in the sixth century, was apparently translated into Middle Persian, bearing the title **Warz Nāmag* [Book of farming]; it could have

⁴³ The influence of pasturage on the medicinal properties of milk is also discussed by Pliny (25.92–94) in connection with the herb Cretan dittany (*Origanum dictamnus*). For that herb’s relevance to goats, see below.

been simply one of a group of such translated texts.⁴⁴ The introduction to “version B” of the Arabic rendering attests:

This is the manuscript of the book which Faṣṭūs the philosopher compiled, in which he has described that which cultivators and others of the people can not dispense with for the work in which God sustains them in regard to their subsistence. They call this book *Warz *nāma* [Book of agriculture] in Persian, and it is in twelve sections.⁴⁵

Both the Iranian recension of the *Geoponica*, as attested through its Arabic translation and the Syriac recension (in thirteen sections) show the translators’ selectivity, when they are compared with the extant Greek text.⁴⁶ The latter was assembled at the behest of the emperor Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus (A.D. 912–59) on the basis of Cassianus’s earlier work. It contains ample treatment of animal husbandry, which is greatly abridged in the Near Eastern texts (thus Syrias sec. 13 corresponds to Greek books 14–18; there are twenty books in the extant Greek text). The prior books on viticulture, by contrast, are given more detailed treatment.

Thus it is uncertain whether any of the lore on goats in *Geoponica* 18 actually circulated in Iran. It is, in any case, fairly unremarkable information. Thus 18.9 (“On she-goats and he-goats”) collects miscellaneous observations on breeding, physical features, and the important uses of the animals’ hair. 18.10 advises that milk production can be increased by pasturing the she-goats on clover and tying the herb *dictamnum* (“Cretan dittany”) around their bellies. The following chapters prescribe for pasturing animals generally; 18.18 returns to the specific subject of goats and is fairly representative of the text. The title is “On Goat Herds” and the source is Vindanius Anatolius of Beirut:

We will describe the care of she-goats (even as of sheep also) both in regard to rearing and to ailments. But that which is unique to them is not to be omitted. For they do not feed together in a flock like sheep; but rather they graze so: plunging and bounding away from each other in scattered pasture. And they delight in precipitous places. That the she-goat has sense to a greater extent than the other mute animals is especially shown by this: whenever she may have weak eyes, she wanders into the sharp reeds⁴⁷ and lances herself.

⁴⁴ The reign of Xusraw I (A.D. 531–79) was notable for both translation activity and the revision of the agrarian tax system; see A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), pp. 366–67, 423 ff. However the Iranian *Geoponica* was probably somewhat later in date, from the reign of Xusraw II (A.D. 591–628) or Yazdigard III (A.D. 632–51). On Cassianus and the *Geoponica*, see Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopdie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften*, vol. 3 (1899), cols. 1667–68; vol. 7 (1912), cols. 1221–25; *Der Kleine Pauly*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1967), cols. 756–57; E. Oder, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Landwirtschaft bei den Griechen II,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* N.F. 45 (1890): 212–22; idem, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Landwirtschaft bei den Griechen III,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* N.F. 48 (1893): 1–40. The edition used below is that of J. N. Niclas (after P. Needham) (Leipzig, 1781); not seen is E. Lipschits, *Geoponiki: vizantijckaya sel'skokhozyajstvennaya entsiklopediya* X veka (Moscow, 1960).

⁴⁵ Text in J. Ruska, “Cassianus Bassus Scholasticus und die arabischen Versionen der griechischen Landwirtschaft,” *Der Islam* 5 (1914): 194. On the Iranian transmission of the text, see C. A. Nallino, “Trache di Opere Greche Giunte agli Arabi per

Trafila Pehlevica,” *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 346–51. On “Persian” (*al-fārisiyā*) in Arabic literature with the meaning “Middle Persian,” see G. Lazard, “Pahlavi, Pārsi, Dari: les langues de l’Iran d’après Ibn al-Muqaffa”; *Iran and Islam: in Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky* (Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 361–91.

⁴⁶ In addition to the studies by Ruska and Nallino (n. 45 above), see P. A. de Lagarde, *De Geoponicon Versione Syriaca Commentatio* (1855; reprint in his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* [Leipzig, 1866]), pp. 120–46, with summary of the Syriac version’s contents. The work alluded to on the last page of Lagarde’s study is D. Claudio Boutelou’s trans. of Abū Zakaria Ibn al-Awwām, *Libro de agricultura*, 2 vols. (Seville and Madrid, 1879). Cf. J. J. Clément-Mullet, *Le Livre de l’agriculture*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1864–67). An English translation will be noted in Part II of this article.

⁴⁷ οξυχόλιος; Niclas cites an earlier printing error, οξυχώριος, “sharp mastic”! On various types of reeds, see Dioscorides, *De materia medica* 4.52 (ed. C. G. Kühn [Leipzig, 1829]). Cf. Aelianus, *De natura animalium* 7.14.

This self-administered doctoring had been more clearly stated by Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* 8.201): “Oculos suffusos capra iunci punctu sanguine exonerat, caper rubi.” The earlier author continues with an anecdote which further illustrates the animal’s “shrewdness” (*sollertia*). Both Pliny and Vindanius are aware of the goat’s individuality and certain degree of superiority. The vividly depicted self-esteem of the goat in *BT* need not in the least be based on these and other classical sources. But it at least manifests a conformity between Iranian and Graeco-Roman perceptions of the same, economically important animal—perceptions which may have been influenced by a slight sharing in ancient Near Eastern folklore.

It may be asked whether the lore of the **Warz Nāmag* would be likely to circulate beyond the court and the learned circle in which such translations were made. Links between the ruling elite and the agricultural base which supported it may have been tenuous; yet the Middle Persian *Dēnkard*, in an uncommonly picturesque moral anecdote, depicts the contact of at least some “skilled” (presumably) literate priests with the soil:

One day when two skilled teacher-priests . . . were drawing water from a well and, the cultivation having been done, they were irrigating and were reciting together the Avesta and Commentary . . .⁴⁸

In this period the culture of Aramaic-speaking Mesopotamia could easily influence Iran through those Iranians who had settled in or who traded with that province, as well as through Christian and Manichean proselytizing. More distant sources, however, may, through such obscure individuals as the two priests, likewise have contributed to enduring Iranian folk traditions.

⁴⁸ Madan, ed., *Dēnkard* 6, pp. 569.20–570.2: *hamē hišt ud warz kard estād āb hamē dād abastāg ud hērbed mard ii ̄ abzārōmand . . . rōz-e ka-šān āb az čah zand pad agenēn hamē guft.*



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THE FABLE OF THE BABYLONIAN TREE

PART II: TRANSLATION*

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THE present translation divides the text and numbers the verses as in the edition of M. Nawwābi.¹ That publication may also be consulted for a romanized transcription of the text (which gives Parthian interpretation of all ideographic forms). Here Nawwābi's interpretation is not always reflected, even when his reading is followed. In several instances it has seemed preferable simply to adhere to the manuscripts' forms rather than to emend; these are indicated in the commentary notes. Words which are interpreted essentially from context are marked with asterisks. The commentary notes are not intended to be exhaustive but to complement the previous studies (cited in Part I) and to refer to parallel material both earlier and later than this text.

1	There has grown a tree	over in Asūr province.
2	Its trunk is dry;	its crown is moist.
3	Its leaf resembles a reed;	its fruit resembles a grape.
4	It bears sweet fruit	for people.
5	That lofty tree	and a goat contested together:
6	"I am superior to you	in many kinds of things.
7	In Xwanirah land	there is no tree of my build.
8	For the king eats of me	when I newly bear fruit.
9	I am ships' planking;	I am the mast for sails.
10	They make brooms of me	which put in order house and home.
11	They make pestles of me	which pound barley and rice.
12	They make fans of me	for the fires.
13	I am shoes for farmers;	I am *sandals for the barefoot.
14	They make ropes of me	which bind your legs.
15	They make clubs of me	which break your neck.
16	They make pegs of me	which hang you upside down.
17	I am fuel for fires	which roast you terribly.
18	In summer I am shade	for the heads of governors.
19	I am milk for farmers,	honey for noblemen.
20	They make boxes of me	for medicines.
21	They carry (these) province to province,	physician to physician.
22	I am a nest for little birds,	shade for wanderers.

23 I cast down my stones; they grow on fresh ground.
 24 If people allow, so they do not harm me,
 25 my top will be green until the day eternal.
 26 And those persons who lack bread and wine
 27 eat fruit from me till they become filled." "
 28 When that had been said by the Babylonian tree,
 29 the goat made reply: "It twists my head
 30 that you would contend with me.
 31 When once of my deeds (you, have heard,
 32 (you) will have shame they refute your foolish speech.
 over them;
 33 You are tall, lofty demon; your top looks like various demons
 34 who were at Jamšēd's For a happy age
 beginning.
 35 the trouble of the demons was bound fast for men's sake.
 36 And the tree's trunk the tree's crown became green.
 became dry;
 37 From these deeds of mine let your crown become green!
 38 But it is fitting for the wise to bear with the stupid.
 39 How long shall I bear with you, tall and useless?
 40 If I make you a reply, I will have heavy shame.
 41 They say in a story, the Persian people,
 42 you are straw and senseless, useless tree.
 43 If you are to bear fruit for people,
 44 they (must) loose the male in the same way as with cattle.
 on you
 45 I indeed think you are a whore's offspring.
 46 Listen, lofty demon, till I refute you.
 47 For the almighty creator, radiant, kind Ohrmazd,
 48 for the pure religion of the which kind Ohrmazd taught,
 Mazdeans
 49 one cannot do worship without me, who am the goat.
 50 For from me they make in the rites of the gods
 milk offerings;
 51 (of Gōšurwān, god of all four-footed creatures,
 52 and of that mighty Hōm) the efficacy is from me.
 53 And those saddlebags they have over the back
 54 one can not make without me, who am the goat.
 55 They make belts of me which they stud with pearls.
 56 I am morocco boots for the nobles,
 57 finger-stalls for the the king's companions.
 renowned,
 58 They make my skin into for desert and plain.
 waterbags
 59 On a hot day and at noon there is cool water from me.

60 They make table coverings on which they arrange dinner.
of me,

61 Tablecloths for great suppers they prepare from my travail.

62 They make table coverings for governors.
of me

63 When lords and barons groom head and beard,
64 they keep me alongside in honor and dignity.

65 They make parchments of for the register.
me,

66 Accounts and contracts they write upon me.

61 They make strings of me which they bind upon bows.

68 They fashion *cloaks with the fine goat-hair
69 which nobles and great wear over the shoulder.
ones

70 They make *straps of me which fasten harness.

71 When Rōdestahm and mount up,
Spandedād

72 who on great raging hold their souls as a sacrifice,
elephants

73 who in many battles hold in action,
74 these do not come loose at from binding the harness.
all

75 Slings and balistas and things of that sort
76 one cannot fashion without me, who am the goat.

77 They make packs of me for merchants;
78 bread and meal and cheese,
79 camphor and black musk
80 many princely garments,
81 they keep in packs
82 They make the ritual cord on to the land of Ērān.
of me,
83 and princely shirts, of that white hair of mine,
84 That *beauty of mine clothing for the great.
maidens praise on breast and neck.

85 (With) one of my kind out of our lineage
86 the body smells as fragrant as a spray of roses.
87 A horn of ten spans I bear over my back.
88 Mountain to mountain I go (over) the land of the great continent,
89 from the frontier of the over to the Warkaš sea.
Indians

90 There are humans of a who live over in that land,
different sort (whose eyes are on their chest).

91 one span high and eye-
chested

92 Their heads are like a dog's; their eyebrows are like men's.

93 They eat the leaves of trees; they milk milk from goats.

94 And also for these humans there is life from me.

95 They make delicacies from me such as koumiss and beer,

96 which governors drink, hill chiefs and nobles.

97 So I am one better than you, Babylonian tree.

98 I am milk and cheese, further, butter pastries and curds.

99 My buttermilk they make porridge for royalty.

100 The Mazdeans perform ablutions on my skin.

101 Harp and vina and lyre and lute and zither,

102 everything they play they sound upon me.

103 So I am one better than you, Babylonian tree.

104 When they lead a goat to market and offer it for sale,

105 whoever lacks ten *drahm* does not approach the goat.

106 Children buy dates for two coppers.

107 May your seeds and stones go to the graves of the dead.

108 This is my use and excellence, this my gift and prosperity,

109 which issues from me, the goat, across this earth so wide.

110 This is my golden speech, which I have addressed to you

111 like one who scatters pearls before sows and boars,

112 or who plays a harp before a camel in rut.

113 Since the beginning creatures have acted (just) as at the original creation.

114 I travel the mountain pastures to the sweet-smelling mountains.

115 I eat fresh grass, drink cold water from springs.

116 You are stuck here like a weaver's peg."

117 The goat departed in victory; the date-palm went down in defeat.

118 (Whoever) has sung my song, whoever on his own has written it,

119 may he live long with every singing; may he view the head of his dead foe.

120 May he who performed and he who wrote be, both in the same manner,

121 renowned of person in the and saved of soul in the immaterial.
material world

So be it.

COMMENTARY

1. On “Asūr” see Part I of this article, n. 1.
2. “Crown” (*sar*), lit. “head.” On this and other parts of the palm, see B. Landsberger, *The Date Palm and Its By-Products according to the Cuneiform Sources*,² p. 22. The anthropomorphism implied in this term was discussed by the Mughal emperor Bābur (d. A.D. 1530), an enthusiastic observer of plant life: “People say that the date-palm amongst vegetables resembles an animal in two respects: one is that, as, if an animal’s head be cut off, its life is taken, so it is with the date-palm, if its head is cut off, it dries off.”³ For the second point, see under vv. 43–44.

3. Cf. *Bābur-Nāma*, p. 508: “Its fruit is like a bunch of grapes, but much larger.”
7. Xwanirah is the central continent of the seven which comprise the earth disk; it contains the known, civilized world.⁴ In Babrius’s fable no. 64, the fir-tree similarly boasts of its stature. Cf. the Persian *Ewe and Grapevine* [*EG*, see Part I, p. 197], lines 19–20, 69–71:

O decrepit ewe, get away from me quickly;
for nothing in the world is better than the grape
God . . . chose
that there would not be [any plant] on the earth’s face like the grapevine.

9. The fir-tree of Babrius no. 64 declares: “I am the ridge-pole of the house; I am the keel of ships.”

10. Cf. the praise of the date-palm in “Inanna and the Gardener Šu-kalle-tuda” (Landsberger, *Date Palm*, p. 10): “Its net of fibers will serve in the king’s palace for cleaning.”

11. In the Akkadian “Tamarisk and Palm” the tamarisk declares: “. . . I thresh, and corn, on which mankind thrives, I thresh” (W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [*BWL*] [Oxford, 1960], p. 159.16).

13. Cf. Landsberger, *Date Palm*, p. 23.
14. Cf. ibid., pp. 10, 18–19, 21, and 24.
15. The proper Zoroastrian technique for killing cattle is discussed in Book 5 of the *Dēnkard*:⁵

² B. Landsberger, *The Date Palm and Its By-Products according to the Cuneiform Sources*, Archiv für Orientforschung, Beiheft 17 (Graz, 1967).

³ A. S. Beveridge, trans., *Bābur-Nāma* (London, 1921), p. 508.

⁴ See the Middle Persian *Bundahišn* [*Bd.*] B B.11 (B. T. Ankesaria, ed. and trans. [Bombay, 1956])/p. 57.2–6 (facsimile ed., T. D. Anklesaria, ed. [Bombay, 1908]); D. N. MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology in the *Bundahišn*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27 (1964): 518–19; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1, *The Early Period*,

ed. B. Spuler, *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Abteilung 1, Band 8, Religion, Lieferung 2, Heft 2A (Leiden and Cologne, 1975), p. 134. See the dispersion of animals and humans over the earth, *Bd.* 13.33–35, 14.37/p. 99.6–14, 106.14–107.11.

⁵ D. M. Madan, ed., *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard* (Bombay, 1911), pp. 456.4–5, 466.12–17; M. F. Kanga, “*Pursiñihā i Boxt-Mārā ut-śān Passox*” ihā: A Pahlavi Text,” *Indian Linguistics* 25 (1964): 5, 9, 11, and 17. On animal sacrifice, see reference below (v. 72) and M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977), index.

Why, in the killing of a sheep, is there a striking with a club before the knife?

. . . the reason is this. Besides the advantage pertaining to the ritual (the cleansing of some demons from the body, in particular a greater portion of pollution and bad flavor) . . . one [reason] is mercy for the sheep. By that method there is less fear and less pain for it from the applying of the knife.

17. Palm fibers are mentioned as part of the fuel for the human parents' first fire (*Bd.* 14.21/p. 103.13). See also Landsberger, *Date Palm*, pp. 49–50. An allusion in *Bd.* 17 A.1/p. 122.7–8 might refer either to the date-palm's use as fuel or to the serrated appearance of the hemispherical crown and of the stem with its residual leaf-stalk bases: "the date-palm, which one calls the split-up (*abar-kirrēnīdag*) plant." The latter explanation might seem more likely. But for the possibly literal sense of the epithet, compare the Middle Persian *Yasna* 71.8: "Like the fire, when one splits up (*abar kirrēnēd*) fuel which is dry, pure, and well looked after for the existence of the sacrifice, so that [the fire] burns it."

19. One may make a general comparison of the economic role of the coconut in south India, as summarized by the fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and the sixteenth-century Franciscan missionary, John da Marignolli. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa includes the comment: "Milk is made from them as well as oil and honey." Friar John observed: "Now the Nargil is the Indian nut. Its tree has a most delicate bark and very handsome leaves like those of the date-palm. . . . [As to the fruit:] Both oil and sugar can be made from it."⁶ In pre-Islamic Iranian taxonomy, dates and coconuts were grouped together with nuts and seeds in the "woody" (*dārēnag*) plant group, whose edible members are enumerated in the Middle Persian text "Xusraw, Son of Kawād, and a Page":

The coconut, when they eat it with sugar: in the Indian language they call it *anārgēl*, and in Persian they call it "Indian walnut," . . . Herat dates which are stuffed with walnuts . . .⁷

22. In Arabia, "many other species of birds [in addition to the ring-necked parakeet, which feeds on the young fruit], bulbuls especially, like to nest in date palms and often use palm fibres as nesting material" (Paul Lunde, "A History of Dates," *Aramco World Magazine*, March/April 1978, p. 22; see also for summation of other date-palm motifs here discussed).

23. Compare, however, Ibn al-‘Awwām's instructions for the careful planting of date stones.⁸

24. The palm is, of course, anxious about the possible tapping or removal of the "heart" or "cheese," the living core of his head. See Landsberger, *Date Palm*, pp. 13–16; *Bābur-Nāma*, pp. 508–9.

⁶ Mahdi Husain, trans., *The Reḥla of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (*India, Maldives Islands and Ceylon*) (Baroda, 1953), p. 198; cf. *Bābur-Nāma*, p. 509. On the use of dates in preparing honey, see J. Newman, *The Agricultural Life of the Jews in Babylonia between the Years 200 C.E.–500 C.E.* (London, 1932), pp. 99–100. Marignolli's account is translated in Henry Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 2, Hakluyt Society, ser. 1, vol. 37 (London, 1866), p. 362.

⁷ *Xusraw i Kawādān ud rēdag-ē* 50–52 in J. M. Jamasp-Asana, *The Pahlavi Text*, vol. 1 (Bombay,

1897), p. 31; J. M. Unvala, *The Pahlavi Text "King Husraw and His Boy"* (Paris, n. d.), p. 25; see also my article in *Asia* 5, no. 1 (New York, The Asia Society, 1978), p. 7.

⁸ M. Abdur Rahman Khan, "Further Elucidation of Technical Matters Discussed in Ibn-al-‘Awwām's Kitāb-al-Filāhah," *Islamic Culture* 30 (1956): 62–63. For an introduction to the text, see idem, "Ibn-al-‘Awwām's Kitāb-al-Filāhah," *Islamic Culture* 24 (1950): 200–17.

25. For the emphasis on the crown, note the criticism of the laurel tree in the Akkadian “Fable of the Willow”: “Your top is not luxuriant” (*BWL*, p. 165.13). In Mesopotamia the aesthetics of trees must have been strongly influenced by “the palm, the king of the trees” (*BWL*, p. 165.17). The second half-verse is identical with one in the Middle Persian *Ayādgār i Zarērān* (see Part I, p. 196).

26. This verse is all the more apt in that the palm may itself yield both wine and bread. For the former, see Landsberger, *Date Palm*, p. 13. For the latter, a recipe is furnished by Ibn al-‘Awwām:⁹

Dates from a green fruit stalk may be used to make bread as follows: Remove their skin and cut their soft inner portions into small pieces; then dry them thoroughly in the sun. When these pieces are ground to powder and boiled once or twice with a salt solution (to remove the acrid taste) and treated with leaven from wheat or barley flour and left alone for a time, they can then be kneaded into dough with water mixed with salt and baked.

27. The Akkadian “Tamarisk and Palm” also depicts the date as a food available to all. The palm asserts:

The orphan girl, the widow, the poor man [. . .]
 Eat without stint my sweet date [. . .]
 The gardener speaks well of me,
 A benefit to both slave and magistrate.
 . my fruit makes the baby grow,
 Grown men eat my fruit (*BWL*, pp. 161.20–21, 163.26–29).

Note the suggested restoration of Callimachus’s iamb 4.75: “First, the fruit of the olive is the food [of the poor].”¹⁰

3.. The second half-verse is most easily read: *bašn-it mānēd dēw-dēw*.

34. Čamšēd, the archetype of kings, was the most renowned of the mythical Pēšdād dynasty; he ruled for the greater part of the millennium of Libra (*Bd.* 33.1, 36.5/pp. 211.8–9, 239.2–4), in which human history began.¹¹ “Happy age” may also be rendered, in an astrological sense, “auspicious age.” For example, it is said of Mani: “You were born in an auspicious sign” (*zād hē pad farrox axtar*).¹²

35. The first half-verse is read (with the manuscripts) *ranj i dēwān*. Perhaps such a use of *ranj* is archaic; in Manichean and Zoroastrian literature the word connotes “(virtuous) toil.” Note “toil in work and the cultivation of the world’s prosperity” (*ranj i pad kār ud warzisn ābādānīh i gēhān*); “Adda applied much labor in those lands” (*adā pad awin sahrān was ranj burd*).¹³ The most notable “binding” of a demon was Frēdōn’s mastery of Dahāk (*Bd.* 29.9, 33.33–35/pp. 198.6–9, 219.14–220.4). Note an apparently

⁹ M. Abdur Rahman Khan, “Elucidation,” p. 63.

¹⁰ R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1959), frag. 194, p. 182.

¹¹ For texts on Čamšēd, see Arthur Christensen, *Les Types du premier homme et du premier roi dans l’histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1934).

¹² M 543 R 4–5 in Carl Salemann, *Manicheische Studien*, vol. 1, *Die mittelpersischen Texte*, Mém. de l’Acad. Imp. des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg 1908, ser. 8, vol. 8, no. 10 (Leningrad, 1908), p. 28. Cf. *farrox* (“auspicious”) and *nēk* (“lucky”) in the

Persian *Šāhnāmah*: J. Scheftelowitz, “Neues Material über die manichäische Urseele und die Entstehung des Zarvanismus,” *Zeitschrift für Indologie u. Iranistik* 4 (1926): 326–27.

¹³ *Dēnkart* 3.419, Madan, ed., p. 403.10; Boyce, trans., apud J. de Menasce, *Le Troisième livre du Dēnkart* (Paris, 1973), p. 375. M 2 R i 15–16; F. C. Andreas and W. B. Henning, *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan*, vol. 2, Sb. PAW, phil.-hist. Kl. 7 (1933), pp. 301–2.

loosened wolf-demon depicted on amulets.¹⁴ The demonic planets (including Dark Sun and Dark Moon, the head and tail of the dragon Gōčihr, i.e., the nodes on the ecliptic of the moon's orbit) are also "bound" to the vehicles of the sun and the moon (*Bd.* 5.4/p. 49.12–15).¹⁵ Thus the term has an astrological significance in harmony with that implied in v. 34.

38. Compare the willow attacking the laurel: "The idiot of the trees . . ." (*BWL*, p. 165.9).

39. A lecture on the need of the wise and the foolish to consult with one another occurred in the Middle Persian translation of the allegorical tales of the Sanskrit *Pañcatantra*. It survives in Syriac and Arabic versions; see T. Nöldeke, *Der Erzählung vom Mäusekönig und seine Ministern: ein Abschnitt der Pehlevi-Bearbeitung des altindischen Fürstenspiegels*, Abh. König. Gesell. Wiss. zu Göttingen, vol. 25, phil.-hist. Kl., no. 3 (Göttingen, 1879), pp. 40–43.

41. The goat might be alluding mockingly to a distinct text similar to the one mentioned by Strabo (see Part I, p. 196).

42. Cf. "Tamarisk and Palm": "You, Tamarisk, are a useless tree. What are your branches? Wood, without fruit" (*BWL*, p. 163:22–23).

44. On this familiar feature of date-palm cultivation, see Landsberger, *Date Palm*, pp. 18–19; Ibn al-Awwām (trans. M. Abdur Rahman Khan), p. 63; *Bābur-Nāma*, pp. 18–19.

47–52. Regarding the milk used in Zoroastrian ritual, see J. J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, 2d ed. (Bombay, 1927), pp. 279–80, 289, etc. (index, s.v. *Jivam*). Since milk is mingled with the plant/god Hōm¹⁶ during the *yasna* rite, it is quite appropriate that Hōm should be mentioned here, as well as the supreme god Ohrmazd, in whose honor the *yasna* is performed. Gōšurwān, the soul of the Primal Bull (*Bd.* 4 A/pp. 46–47) and patron of animal life (*Bd.* 3.14/p. 35.2–7), may be mentioned here simply because an animal is speaking. He does not receive any special rites.¹⁷

53. The uses indicated here and in vv. 58 and 77 are summed up in *Geponica* (see Part I, n. 44) 18.9.3: "The hair is necessary for cords and bags and for nautical uses."

60–62. See *EG* 35: "From my skin there will be a beautiful ('seven-colored') spread" (*ghāli-yi haft-rang*).

64. The meaning is perhaps clarified by comparison with *EG* 37: "I am a worthy seating-place for the world."

67–76. In the fragmentary Akkadian "Ox and Horse," the ox enumerates the uses of its hide for military equipment (*BWL*, p. 179:10–15).

70. In "Tamarisk and Palm," the palm tree boasts of being made into harness (*BWL*, p. 159:18–20). For the goat's claim in the present text, cf. *EG* 36, 59–60:

From my skin there will be straps and girths. . . .
Cloths for caparisoned horses, (and) hobbles,
will be from the sheep's skin, O lord!

¹⁴ A. D. H. Bivar, "A Parthian Amulet," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 30 (1967): 512–24; see my *Sasanian Stamp Seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1978), motif 2 g.

¹⁵ See also J. de Menasce, *Škand-Gumānīk Vičār: la solution décisive des doutes* (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1945), 4.39–40.

¹⁶ On whom see M. Boyce, "Haoma, Priest of the

Sacrifice," *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), pp. 62–80.

¹⁷ A summary account of Gōšurwān is given in Louis H. Gray, "Foundations on the Iranian Religions," *J. of the Cama Or. Inst.* 15 (1929): 79–82. It neglects, however, this god's close association, in myth and cult, with the primal man, Gayōmard.

71. The text fittingly names two heroes who would have been as familiar in the epics of the Arsacid period as they are in the Persian *Šāhnāmah* (in the forms Rustam and Isfandyār). Spandedād (the son of Wištāsp and one of the leaders against the Turanian Arjāsp), since he figures in sacred history, naturally has a role in the *Ayādgār i Zarērān*. But that text also assumes familiarity with Rustam, even though it does not (in the manner of the *Šāhnāmah*) depict his rivalry with Spandedād.¹⁸

*was ēstēd *šifarg i Rōdestahm
ud was zrēh i rōšn* *was kantigr i purr tigr
ud was zrēh i čahārkard*

There were many Rustam-axes,
and many shining panoplies
many quivers full of arrows,
and many four [times] tempered (?) [steel] panoplies.

For the term *čahār-kard* (lit. “made four”) and, in a similar context, *haft-kard* (“made seven”), cf. Nyberg, *Manual*, vol. 2, p. 113.

⁷² The depiction of the two warriors mounted, Indian fashion, on elephants could be regarded as either as Arsacid survival (a reminiscence of Bactria and India) or a late Sasanian intrusion due to sixth-century A.D. Indian influences. Note an even clearer Indian motif in the *Ayādgār i Zarērān*—the fourfold division of the army according to Indian military theory.¹⁹

uš kārawān ēwarz kunēnd *ud pilbān pad pīl rawēnd*
ud stōrbān pad stōr rawēnd *ud wardēndār pad wardēn rawēnd*

His troops pass muster,
and the cavalry move out on
(their) steeds,
and the elephantarchs move out on elephants,
and the charioteers move out on (their) chariots.

Here the infantry is placed first, contrary to the order of terms in the Sanskrit compound *hasty-aśva-ratha-padātam*. This deviation would have been all the easier if the reciters of the *Ayādgār* had in mind the game of chess, where the pawns (*payg*) occupy their own row. The order of the back row (K/Q's B1, Kt1, and R1) is given correctly: elephant (*pil*), horse (*asp*), and chariot (*rah*).²⁰

The second half-verse has been read in accordance with the manuscripts: *dārēnd gyān zōhr andar*. (On *zōhr* in Zoroastrian ritual, see Boyce, “*Ātaš-zōhr*,” *JRAS* 1966, pp. 100–18.)

78. The "butter-sweets" are listed in "Xusraw and Page" 38–41 (see n. 7):

These butter sweets are altogether fine and good: In summer, the almond sweet and the walnut sweet, walnut pastry, oily pastry, and oily "fingers" that they make from gazelle's fat

¹⁸ Sec. 28: Jamasp-Asana, *Pahlavi Texts*, pp. 3-4; A. Pagliaro, "Il Testo pahlavico Ayāt-kār-i-Zarərān," *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, Cl. di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, Ser. 6, 1 (1925): 567; H. S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1964), p. 20.12-14; cf. idem, *Manual*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1974), p. 186 regarding **xifara*.

¹⁹ Sec. 27: *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 1, p. 3; Pagliaro, "Il Testo pahlavico Ayātkār-i Zarērān," p. 567; Nyberg, *Manual*, vol. 1, p. 20.11-12.

²⁰ See A. A. Macdonell, "The Origin and Early

History of Chess," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1898, pp. 118 ff.; and the Middle Persian *Mādīyān ī Čatrang* 10: *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 2, pp. 116-17; Pagliaro, "Il Testo Pahlavico sul Gioco degli Scacchi," *Miscellanea Giovanni Galbiati*, vol. 3 (Milan, 1951), p. 104. Of course Indian strategy allowed for various deployments of the "four limbs" (*caturāṅga*) of the army; see, for example, *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra Part II*, X.2.9, X.5, R. P. Kangle, trans., University of Bombay Studies: Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Pali, no. 2 (Bombay, 1963).

and fry in walnut butter. In winter, the almond sweet, the “milky” sweet, the “snowy” sweet, sugar candy, and the coriander sweet are the best. But no butter-sweet can compare with the jelly which is made of the juices of the apple and the silver quince.

79. The Zoroastrian “Lineage of Animals” groups the marten and some other Mustelidae (but also the squirrel) into a weasel “genus” (*Bd.* 13.20/p. 96.11–13). Use of the name Tuxār for the region of the upper Oxus necessarily post-dates the conquest of present-day northern Afghanistan by migrating tribes in the second century B.C.²¹

82. On the ritual cord, see Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 173–75. Aelian makes mention of the white hair of “Caspian goats” (*De natura animalium* 17.34). It is possible that the goat means the Caspian Sea by “Warkaš Sea” (see next note); if so, he would be saying that his wild species ranges through the Hindu Kush, its western extensions, and the Alburz mountains.

89. The Warkaš (or Frāxwkard) Sea is a vast ocean in later Zoroastrian mythology.²²

91–92. The eye-chested, the ear-chested, and other peculiar or demi-animal races are listed in the “Lineage of Mankind” (*Bd.* 14.38–39/p. 107.2–14). The ear-chested people and the cynocephali also appear in the *Šāhnāmah*, which locates them in Māzandarān.²³

94–98. See *EG* 31–34, 43–49:

First I yield butter; further, I give milk,
also cheese and curds and oil in measure.
From my milk there is clotted cream for the world.
There is fresh cheese in my heart....
Beggar and king and lords and poor man
all take refuge in the ewe.
All people are in need of my milk,
especially my curds and confections and cheese.
For there are Kurds and Lurs and Turks and Tajiks,
blind and seeing and lame and sheikhs,
who altogether need the ewe.

See also the herder’s products in “Enkidu and Dumuzi” 92–118.²⁴ Abū Bakr aş-Şüli (d. A.D. 946–47), in an elegy on his goat, rhapsodizes on the abundance of milk she supplied.²⁵

100. On the routine daily ablutions (not now performed on a skin), see Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 88 ff.

101. “Xusraw and Page” 62–63 enumerates musical instruments, as well as the appropriate props for jugglers, acrobats, and other entertainers.

105–6. On the *drahm* (the standard, silver unit of Sasanian coinage) and the bronze *pašīz* (a fractional unit), see R. Göbl, *Sasanidische Numismatik* (Braunschweig, 1968),

²¹ On Tuxār(istān) see W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 3d ed. (London, 1968), pp. 68–69; R. N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia: The Arabs in the East* (New York, 1975), p. 29.

²² See M. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1, pp. 135–36.

²³ See D. Monchi-Zadeh, *Topographisch-historische Studien zum iranischen Nationalepos* (Wiesbaden, 1975), pp. 62–63, 162–63, including references to cynocephali in classical literature. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, in his

travels in Bengal, comparing the mouths of one people to a dog’s muzzle (trans. M. Husain, pp. 241–42).

²⁴ J. J. A. van Dijk, *La Sagesse suméro-accadienne: recherches sur les genres littéraires des textes sapientiaux* (Leiden, 1953), p. 72.

²⁵ K. A. Fariq, “An ‘Abbāsid Secretary-Poet Who Was Interested in Animals,” *Islamic Culture* 24 (1950): 267, vv. 30 ff.

pp. 25–27, 29. On the latter, see also R. N. Frye, *Notes on the Early Coinage of Transoxania* Numismatic Notes and Monographs, no. 113 (New York, 1949), p. 49. “Two coppers” should have purchased enough dates for a meal; the Palestinian ‘Ulla, traveling in Sasanian Mesopotamia, refers to the cheapness of dates: “a basketful of honey for a *zuz*” (i.e., a *drahm*; Newman, *Agricultural Life*, p. 22). The Talmud also refers to a case in which a high-quality date-palm (one of the “Persian” species) was destroyed, and 33 1/3 *zuz* had to be paid in compensation (idem, *Agricultural Life*, p. 98). The goat’s boast is thus rather artful. In *EG* 50, the ewe takes a less aristocratic approach: “My buyers are more numerous than your leaves.” Throughout the Middle Iranian text, however, the language employed by the two opponents is such as would be suitable to a court or provincial noble.

107. With the goat’s peroration compare the ewe’s exordium (*EG* 29–30):

Behold my produce from the lord God;
I am a prince by God’s favor.

110. The striking parallel between this verse and Matthew 7:6 (“do not throw your pearls before swine”) has been discussed by G. Widengren, who views the metaphor as an Iranian loan to the Aramaic-speaking world. This suggestion necessarily remains uncertain, since the date of the verse cannot be determined. The symbolism of the Gnostic “Song of the Pearl” may well have been lost if that narrative came to circulate orally in Iran. Or, vice versa, the religious text may have been based on familiar secular stories (whether ultimately of Iranian or other origin). Compare the Manichean parable of the pearl-borer, which adapted a secular (but didactic) tale from the introduction to the Middle Persian translation of the *Pañcatantra*.²⁶

111. But, just as Matthew 7:6 also has a characteristic Near Eastern image (“do not give dogs what is holy”), so v. 111 follows the pearl metaphor with a familiar Iranian reference. The divinities Wahrām and Dahmān Āfrīn may assume the “form of a rutting camel” (*uštrahe kəhrpa vaðairyaoš* in *Yašt* 14.11 [cf. 14.12 and 39, 17.13]) or “the form of a superlative camel, superlatively rutting with rut” (*uštrahe kəhrpa ayryehe ayryō. + ma du.mastəmahe, Pūrvišnihā* 31; Middle Persian “rutting with a superlative rut.”²⁷

114. This truism about goats has been seen in *Geoponica* 18.18 (translated in Part I, p. 198). It also occurs in 18.9: “The she-goats delight in mountainous places.”

115. The seasonal movement of goats is alluded to by Abū Bakr as-Šūlī (see n. 25): “In summer she enjoyed comforts of the cold water; in winter she warmed herself by the fire.” The goat neglected to boast of its delicious meat or the use of its fat for cooking (cf. “Xusraw and Page” 21 and 53 and as-Šūlī). The date-palm, too, was by no means exhaustive, forgetting baskets, matting, etc. (Landsberger, *Date Palm*, pp. 9–10).²⁸ It might also have boasted of the alleged medicinal properties of dates (in agreement with

²⁶ G. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne-Opladen, 1960), p. 36; the “Song of the Pearl” in Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, 2d ed. (Boston, 1967), pp. 112 ff. The Middle Persian *Pañcatantra* is attested by its Arabic translation; see T. Nöldeke, “Burzōes Einleitung zum Buche Kalila wa Dimna,” *Schriften der Wiss. Gesell.* in *Strassburg* 12 (1912): 19. Cf. Henning, “Sogdian Tales,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies* 11 (1945): 465–69.

²⁷ Cf. C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), col. 50 (translating with the applied meaning) and K. M. Jamaspasa and H. Humbach, *Pūrvišnihā: A Zoroastrian Catechism* (Wiesbaden, 1971), p. 49 (using the basic meaning of *masta-*, “intoxicated”; see also for Vedic formal parallels).

²⁸ For uses in modern Iran, see G. Redard, “Le Palmier à Khur,” *A Locust’s Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London, 1962), pp. 213–19.

Ibn al-‘Awwām; note the cautious remarks of Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 23.97). Perhaps the story told to Alexander the Great in the Persian *Iskandarnāmah* about a magic palm reflects some more ancient Iranian folklore:

They said: There is a tree in our city in the king's courtyard which is always green, summer and winter. That tree bears dates, and any sick person who eats of those dates becomes healthy in an hour.

This tree had grown out of the bones of a dead king; its fruit not only healed, it also rendered pregnant the daughter of the living king.²⁹

116. Note the uses in weaving proudly claimed in “Tamarisk and Palm” (*BWL*, pp. 157.5, 159.24, 163.35).

117. Note *EG* 119–22, where a moral is worked into the conclusion:

When the ewe was unable to reply to the vine,
with truth of heart she proclaimed to it her affection:
“The compassionate one should have mindfulness of a friend;
no deed can be better than this.”

Note the moral of Babrius's fable (Part I, p. 197).

²⁹ I. Afšār ed., *Iskandarnāmah* (Tehran, 1964), pp. 229–31. For the tree as a fertility figure, see, for example, J. G. Frazer, *The New Golden Bough* (New York, 1961), p. 45.